LCMCISD Elementary Technology Professional Development – Using Skype

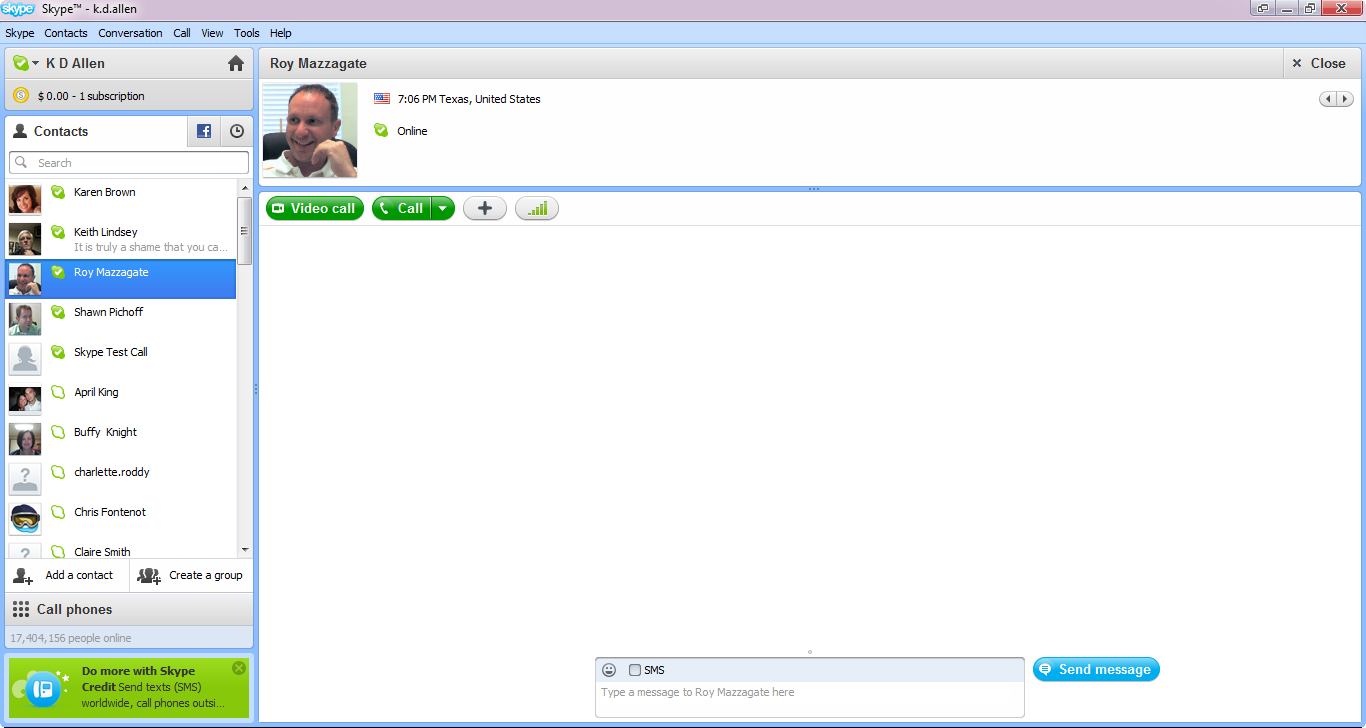
Wiki resources: <http://lcmelementarypd.wikispaces.com/Skype+Resources>

Skype™ is a free software program you can install on your computer, Smartphone, or tablet computer. The application allows you to make free Skype-to-Skype calls to anyone in the world at any time – day or night. According to Skype, they have over 405 million users. Many organizations use Skype to reduce costs on videoconferencing, for parent conferences, and professional development activities. Skype is one of the most widely-used tools to create Personal Learning Communities.

Skype is much more than a method to call others. Skype also allows you to send an Instant Message to another Skype user, participate in a video call with another Skype user, share files, display your screen, and manage your contacts, groups, and conversations.   
  
There are a variety of ways to use Skype in the classroom including:

* collaboration with another class on a joint research project
* bring authors or other speakers into the classroom via Skype
* allow home-bound students to participate in the classroom environment and share documents
* learn about other cultures from students around the world
* conduct interviews
* participate in a book study with another class and hold web book talks
* students can create virtual presentations for students in other schools
* attend webinars with students to raise awareness on a variety of subjects
* practice public speaking/communication skills.

An example of the home screen in Skype.

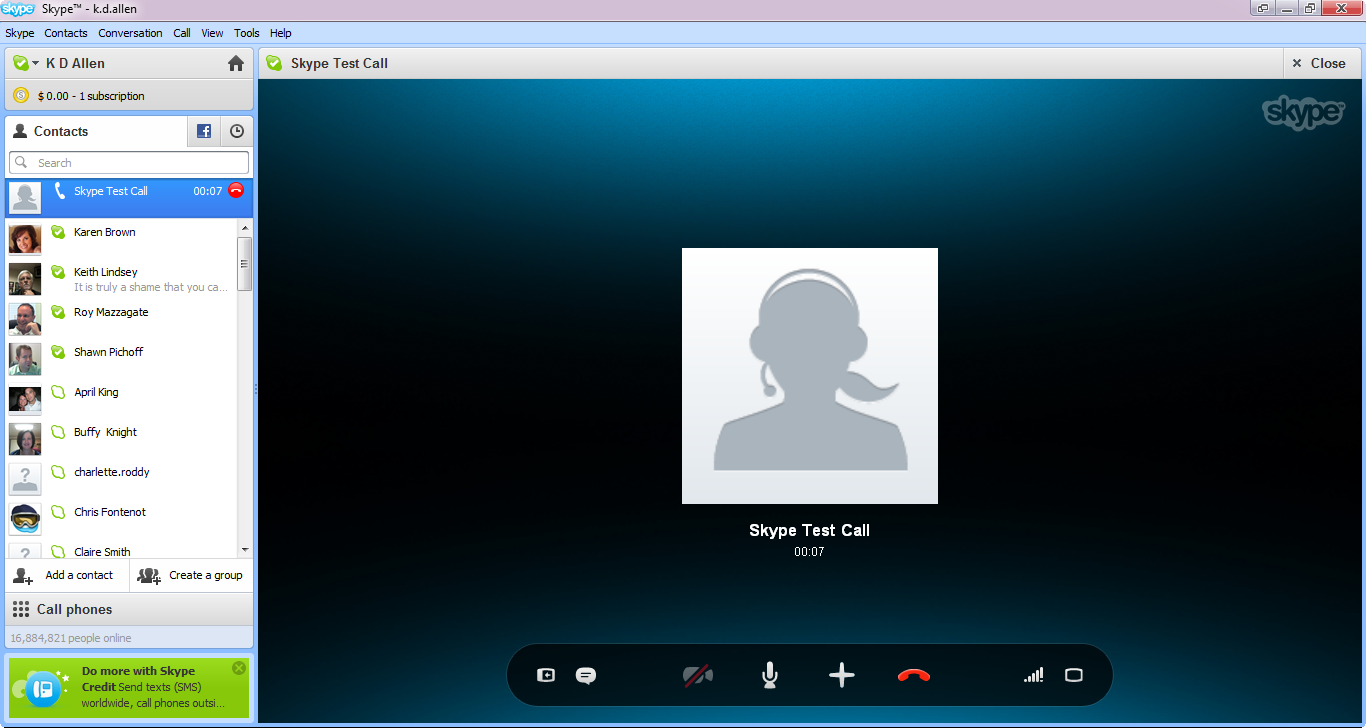


You can view your contacts from the left side of the window. If you click on one of your contacts, a screen similar to the one in the picture above will appear. You can then send them an Instant Message, call them with audio, initiate a video call, send files, add others to the conversation, or share the desktop.

In order to contact people using Skype, you will need to know their Skype username. If you do not know their username, you can search for them using their email address. Before you can add the contact, you must send a contact request to them. Their contact will be added to your contact list, but will appear offline until they accept your request.

Once the request is approved, they will be added as a contact in Skype. You will be able to see your contact list regardless of which device you use for Skype. For example, you may primarily use your computer for Skype. If you are at home and want to use your iPad or other device, when you log in to Skype, your contact list will be available.

To call a contact, find the person you want to call by looking in your contact list. Be sure to check their status to see if they are available. If they are available, click their name, and click the green call button. You will see a screen similar to the one below.



If you move your mouse during the call, additional options like the ones listed in the example above will be displayed. Use your mouse to hover over the pictures in the menu and additional information will be provided about the options available during the Skype call.

We will take an opportunity to practice some of the features of Skype with another participant in our class for a few moments.

* Add a contact to your contact list (someone in class or test account.)
* Create a group of contacts.
* Send an instant message to a Skype user by typing a message in the box at the bottom of the contact screen.
* Add someone else (from your contact list) to the conversation.
* Use emoticons or add pictures to your instant message to show how you are feeling.
* Send documents, photos, or web links.
* Initiate a video call to one of your contacts.
* Display the Instant Messaging window in the video call.
* Mute your microphone. Click the microphone icon again to turn the microphone back on.
* Share your screen during the call to share an item with your contact during the call.
* Send your contact a file.

Skype provides us with a way to increase communication and collaboration with our students, faculty, staff, and parents. We can also use these types of communication tools to engage our students and help our employees build Personal Learning Networks.

**There are some great resources for Skype in the Classroom:**

The Complete Educator’s Guide to Using Skype Effectively in the classroom: <http://theedublogger.com/files/2011/04/skype_guide-23lp0qv.pdf>

Skype’s list of Uses in the classroom: <http://blogs.skype.com/play/2011/07/top-uses-of-skype-in-the-class.html>

Learning Beyond Walls: 21 Skype Resources: <http://teacherbootcamp.edublogs.org/2010/08/22/learning-beyond-walls-21-skype-resources/>

Virtual Author Visits in Your Library or Classroom: <http://skypeanauthor.wetpaint.com/>

A Slide Share presentation about Using Skype in the Classroom: <http://www.slideshare.net/ashleyleigh003/skype-in-the-classroom-8495650>

Technology 4 Kids Wiki for Skype Resources: <http://technology4kids.pbworks.com/w/page/25344912/Skype>

The Hole in the Sky – 10 Ways to Use Skype in the Classroom: <http://blog.learningtoday.com/blog/bid/41726/10-Ways-to-Use-Skype-in-the-Classroom>

How to Use Skype in the ESL/EFL Classroom: <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Eaton-UsingSkype.html>

Spreadsheet with contact information for Skyping other classrooms: <https://spreadsheets0.google.com/pub?hl=en&hl=en&key=0AnuR2-1MSEbqdDctTEpEMkZ4dzM3OVFheHRJRFBvNWc&single=true&gid=0&output=html>